

## 9. CULTURAL RESOURCES

### CULTURAL RESOURCES VISION

*In 2035, St. Croix County's interesting history, local traditions, unique architecture and historical sites in part represented by Baldwin's windmill, Hudson's Octagon House, old train depots, barns and churches throughout out the county are preserved for future generations. The County has worked with appropriate organizations at funding and marketing St. Croix's cultural resources to its residents and others. The County has worked with local units of government to maintain their unique local character through buildings, sites and events (both art and cultural). The libraries and historic societies throughout the County are important repositories of cultural resources for our children and adults.*

### INTRODUCTION

St. Croix County has many unique cultural resources that define its local communities and are a factor in the high quality of life residents enjoy. Its cultural resources include historical structures and sites, scenic vistas and areas and culturally important structures, events and activities that celebrate the county's diverse heritage. Preservation of historic, archeological, cultural and scenic resources help to foster community pride, improve quality of life, contribute to the preservation of rural character, encourage low-impact tourism and provide social and cultural continuity between past, present and future. This section describes the existing conditions of the cultural resources of St. Croix County.

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### **Sites & Structures**

St. Croix County has a long and storied history, with many significant sites. These sites include Native American burial mounds, encampments, lumbering camps, historic downtowns, classic architecture and rural barns, windmills and farmsteads. Historic structures, sites, and districts have unique, often irreplaceable, social value. Such historic resources can also be responsible for defining much of a community's identity.

According to the National Register of Historic Places, St. Croix County has 30 historic properties and four historic districts that have received state or federal historic landmark designation. The following table identifies sites and structures on the state and/or national register.

**TABLE 9.1 - SITES AND STRUCTURES ON THE STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES – ST. CROIX COUNTY**

HISTORIC SITE	LOCATION	MUNICIPALITY	LISTED
Bell, Marcus Sears, Farm	1100 Heritage Dr.	New Richmond	1988
Bernd, William J., House	210 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
Bernd, William J., House	143 Arch Av.	New Richmond	1988
Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad Car Shop Historic District	Bounded by: Gallahad Rd., Sommers, 4 <sup>th</sup> , & St. Croix streets	North Hudson	1984
Darling, Frederick L., House	617 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Hudson	1984
Dwelley, William, House	1002 4 <sup>th</sup> St.	Hudson	1984
Epley, Dr. Frank W., Office	137 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
First English Lutheran Church	354 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
Glover, Ezra, Jr., House	415 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
Hudson Public Library	304 Locust St	Hudson	1984
Humphrey, Herman L., House	803 Orange St.	Hudson	1984
Johnson, August, House	427 St. Croix St.	Hudson	1984
Johnson, Dr. Samuel C., House	405 Locust St.	Hudson	1984
Kell, William H., House	215 Green Ave.	New Richmond	1988
Kinnickinnic Church	WI J, jct. with WI JJ	Kinnickinnic	2000
Kriesel, Louis C. & Augusta, Farmstead	132 State Trunk Hwy 35/64	St. Joseph	2009
Lewis Farmhouse	Farm Dr.	Boardman	1982
Lewis-Williams House	101 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Hudson	1985
Merritt, Samuel T., House	904 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	Hudson	1984
Mielke, Joseph, House	326 Second St. W	New Richmond	1988
Moffat, John S., House	1004 3 <sup>rd</sup> St	Hudson	1974
New Richmond News Building	145 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
New Richmond West Side Historic District	Bounded by: Willow, Minnesota, W. 2 <sup>nd</sup> , S. Washington	New Richmond	1988
Opera Hall Block	516 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	Hudson	1979
Phipps, William H., House	1005 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Hudson	1987
Second St. Commercial District	1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , Walnut, & Locust	Hudson	1984
Sixth St. Historic District	6 <sup>th</sup> St. between Myrtle & Vine St.	Hudson	1984
Soo Line Depot	120 High St.	New Richmond	1988
Soo Line High Bridge	Restricted	Somerset	1977
St. Croix County Courthouse	904 3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	Hudson	1982
Stillwater Bridge*	MN36/WI64 over St. Croix River	Houlton	1989
Thelen, John Nicholas & Hermina, House	1383 & 1405 Thelen Farm Trail	St. Joseph	2009
Thompson, Erick J., House	350 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	New Richmond	1988
Williams, T.E., Block**	321 2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	Hudson	2009

source: National Register of Historic Places < <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com> >. November 22, 2011

\*National Register listing only. \*\*State Register listing only.

Additional older structures and homes within St. Croix County also likely qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. In 1983, the Wisconsin State Historical Society began compiling a historic resources list of historic sites in Wisconsin communities. It includes archeological sites that are included in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory database and many historic sites identified through local historical groups, newspaper stories and other resources. The Wisconsin Historical Society continuously updates and maintains the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI). This database of approximately 120,000 buildings, structures, and objects illustrates Wisconsin's unique history. The AHI documents a wide range of historic properties, mostly privately owned, such as the round barns, log houses, metal truss bridges, small town commercial buildings and Queen Anne houses that create Wisconsin's distinct cultural landscape. The inventory is not comprehensive, and in many cases the inventory is outdated because resources and structures have been moved, demolished or altered.

#### **Vulnerable Historic Sites**

The *St. Croix County All Hazards Mitigation Plan* identifies historic structures, sites, and districts as being especially vulnerable to natural disasters, due to their unique, often irreplaceable, social value.

In St. Croix County, over 1,500 local historic structures and sites have been identified as having historic value and are on the AHI. However, it should be noted that the inventory is not comprehensive, and in many cases the inventory is outdated because resources and structures have been moved, demolished or altered. For more information see the Wisconsin Historical Society website, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/>.

Most local communities in St. Croix County have identified their own list of unique historic, scenic and cultural resources as part of their comprehensive plan cultural resources element. In their review of the state AHI it frequently becomes apparent that many of the identified sites have been demolished or destroyed. Raising awareness of the importance of the remaining sites will be key to their continued existence.

Additional historic sites which are not protected and should be mentioned include:

- River's Edge Restaurant and Apple River Tubing sites for the connection to several prominent visitors and the tubing industry of from the 1950's to the 1980's.
- Wildwood area on the Wildwood Trail. It is the site of a former stage coach stopover with remnants of the original hostelry, school, woodworking factory, brick making industry and iron mining.
- Army Nike Missile Base in Town of Warren. It was a cold war missile site from 1962 to 1972 with up to 250 men stationed at the site. Many of the original structures are still intact.
- Muzzvey's New Saratoga Springs in the Village of Star Prairie, this was the site of a 19<sup>th</sup> century health spa.

Any development should be reviewed, pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 44.40 (1989), against the Wisconsin Historical Society historic resource list to determine whether historic properties within the area will be affected. The Historical Society also recommends that proposed developments where a known historic or archeological site exists be surveyed by a qualified archeologist. Sites that are identified as archeological sites are predominantly burial sites. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from intentional disturbance.

Local communities should work with developers, the county and the state to preserve the historic farmsteads, barns and outbuildings that contribute to each community's agricultural heritage, rural character and aesthetic beauty and create a unique sense of place.

Additional historic or archeological resources could be identified in local communities through an individual or joint effort to create a countywide survey of historic and archeological resources. The Wisconsin Historical Society has grant funding available to help local communities undertake a historical survey, with additional grant funds for a variety of historic preservation activities. There is presently no local match requirement.

### **Historic Resource Programs**

Once resources are identified, they can be protected through a variety of techniques. One option is listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Register of Historic Places programs. There are several benefits that come with being listed, such as eligibility for state and federal income tax credits for rehabilitation, use of a special historic building code and protective negotiations when government-funded or assisted projects (i.e. roads) threaten the resources. They can also be valued elements in tourism.

Owner-occupied homes that are eligible for listing in the National Register do not have to be formally listed in the National Register to be eligible for historic preservation tax credits for rehabilitation projects.

The “**Barn Again!**” program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Successful Farming magazine has been a successful and visible program for recognizing, rewarding and encouraging the preservation of historic farm buildings.

Another popular program, the **Barns Preservation Initiative**, to help owners rehabilitate and preserve Wisconsin’s barns was begun in 1994 by the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin Extension and the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation. This program recognizes the importance of the state’s agricultural heritage as embodied in barns, farmhouses, outbuildings and landscapes and has initiated steps to help owners and organizations to preserve and reuse those cultural resources. Workshops that address the preservation of barns have been conducted, informational and technical materials have been prepared, and plans to make additional resources available and to address other rural preservation topics are underway.

Although no funding is available, another program that helps identify cultural resources is the **Wisconsin State Fair Century and Sesquicentennial Farm or Home Award program**. The program recognizes and honors farm sites and structures and homes which have been in continuous family ownership for 100 years or 150 years or more.

The Century Farm and Home Program began in 1948 in conjunction with the State of Wisconsin’s Centennial Celebration. There are approximately 8,445 Century Farms and Homes in Wisconsin. The Sesquicentennial Program originated in 1998 as part of the state’s sesquicentennial celebration, and since that time, 685 families have been honored in Wisconsin.

Century and Sesquicentennial Farm awards are presented during a special program each year at the Wisconsin State Fair. Honorees receive complimentary fair admission tickets, an invitation to the awards breakfast, a commemorative photo, certificate and outdoor display sign.

Through 2011, there were 121 Century Farms/Homes that have received this recognition in St. Croix County. More information is available through the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection or the Wisconsin State Fair Office.

### **Historical Organizations & History Rooms**

St. Croix County residents have a strong connection to the past and several local historical organizations actively work to preserve the county’s heritage.

- The St. Croix County Historical Society, located in Hudson, is dedicated to promoting interest in history through the development and preservation of the Octagon House

Museum complex and Research Center. The Society collects and preserves historical information and artifacts associated with St. Croix County. Guided tours of the Victorian-era Octagon House Museum complex are provided year-round. In addition to the elegant home and its beautifully maintained gardens, the complex also includes a Garden House exhibit and a Museum Gift Shop, located in the former carriage house. More information is available on their website: <http://community.pressenter.net/~octagon/index.html>.

- The New Richmond Preservation Society was started in 1982 to preserve the history of the City of New Richmond and the surrounding area. The society owns and operates the Heritage Center, which is open for tours, programs and events. The Heritage Center started with the Bell-Tierney Victorian farmhouse, grainary and barn and has since been expanded to include nine additional historic buildings including a log cabin, church, school, general store and log blacksmith shop. Each structure has authentic artifacts from the past. There is also an 11-acre trail system, The Paperjack Creek Greenway. This nature walk is an opportunity to see, touch and smell some of the vegetation that the settlers used and grew. Tours of the facilities include presentations on life 110 years ago. Additional information is available on their website: <http://www.nrheritagecenter.org>.
- The St. Croix Valley Genealogical Society was formed in 1979 as a chapter of the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society. Members are interested in collecting, preserving, and publishing genealogical and biographical materials relating to areas associated with the St. Croix River Valley and in particular, areas in Pierce and St. Croix counties, Wisconsin. Additional information is available on their website: [www.scvgs.wordpress.com](http://www.scvgs.wordpress.com).
- The German Settlement Heritage Society works to preserve and document the heritage of the first German settlement in St. Croix County. They organized in 2005 and hold occasional reunions and genealogy gatherings. The society has identified the original settlement, a historic home and the pioneer's cemetery. They have cleared an area called Pioneer Grove, it is open to the public for viewing daily. Additional information is available on their website: [home.earthlink.net/~germansettlement/](http://home.earthlink.net/~germansettlement/).
- The Kinnickinnic Historical Association maintains and restores the Kinnickinnic Church which was built in 1868. The church is on the National Historic Register and houses memorabilia about the American humorist Edgar Wilson "Bill" Nye. Nye who was a journalist and one of the major American humorists in the last half of the 19th century, grew up in the Kinnickinnic/River Falls area. He was born Aug. 25, 1850 in Shirley, Maine, his family moved to Wisconsin in 1852. As a young adult he taught school and studied law in Wisconsin. During his youth he practiced his public speaking in the empty Kinnickinnic church. Nye died Feb. 22, 1896 in Arden, North Carolina. A historical marker commemorating his accomplishments is located in Kinnickinnic along STH 65.
- The Hudson Vintage Neighborhoods Alliance organized to encourage strong neighborhoods as well as the preservation and enhancement of the character and integrity of the historical neighborhoods in Hudson Wisconsin. They provide assistance with historic designation and enforcement of the City of Hudson's preservation ordinance. Resources are identified on their website: [www.hvna.net](http://www.hvna.net).
- Baldwin Area Historical Society organized to collect, preserve and disseminate historical information and artifacts of the Baldwin area. They are documenting historic buildings and oral histories. Additional information is available on their website: [www.baldwinhistory.org](http://www.baldwinhistory.org).
- Glenwood Area Historical Society collects historical resources. A permanent site has not yet been identified. For additional information contact Glenwood Hills Chamber of Commerce at [www.glenwoodcitywi.com/](http://www.glenwoodcitywi.com/).



- There are also several prominent history rooms located in St. Croix County's libraries. St. Croix County's history rooms are located in the Baldwin Library, Deer Park Library, Hudson Area Library, River Falls Library, Roberts' Hazel Mackin Community Library, Somerset Library and at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Area Research Center: [www.uwrf.edu/library/arc](http://www.uwrf.edu/library/arc). A history room is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history or genealogy of an area. For example, the History Room in the Hudson Area Library has more than 1,300 items which include old directories, telephone books, architectural and historic surveys, yearbooks, newspapers, plat books and maps, marriage indexes, censuses, cemetery indexes, and anniversary print editions of the Hudson Star Observer. The St. Croix County Historical Society also houses a Research Center at the Octagon House complex in the Carriage House and the New Richmond Preservation Society houses genealogical resources at the Heritage Center.

### Cultural Resources

St. Croix County has several cultural resources available to residents, including:

- The Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson is a performing arts center for the St. Croix valley. Facilities include professional performance and blackbox theaters where seven to ten adult and children's theater productions are performed each year; four art galleries where original works by regional artists in several mediums are exhibited; concert performances on the Wurlitzer theater pipe organ and Wurlitzer grand piano; performances by the Phipps Oratorio Society chorus and orchestra; and classrooms for performing, visual arts and children's classes. More information is available on their website: [www.thehipps.org](http://www.thehipps.org).
- The Old Gem Theater is a performing arts center located in New Richmond. It is an art deco style theater built in 1913 for vaudeville and moving pictures. Today the Old Gem offers live entertainment including guest artists, comedy nights and music shows. The main stage theater productions and youth theater both featuring the Old Gem Resident Acting Company of Professional Actors. The youth theater productions are selected to compliment high school productions and provide field trip opportunities for area youth to experience the arts. The Old Gem also offers student classes in acting, music and dance. More information is available on their website: [www.oldgemtheater.com](http://www.oldgemtheater.com).
- The Hammond Arts Alliance promote the arts in the Hammond community by creating a safe and fun environment for community exposure to and involvement in the arts. Activities include gallery exhibits at the Foster Art Vault Gallery (basement of Associated Bank in Hammond) and music shows at the Hammond Hotel. Additional information is available on their website: [www.hammondartsalliance.org](http://www.hammondartsalliance.org).
- Sons of Norway Valkyrien Chapter, Woodville, which among other activities, promotes and preserves Norwegian heritage and traditions through cultural and social opportunities offered in local lodge and district lodge activities. The Woodville chapter meets monthly in Woodville. Additional information is available on the national organization's website: [www.sofn.com/home/index.jsp](http://www.sofn.com/home/index.jsp).
- Summer concert series, where local, regional and national musicians perform classical, rock, rap and country music, are held in Baldwin, Hammond, Hudson, New Richmond, River Falls, and Somerset.
- Local communities will continue to promote their unique cultural and farming heritage by supporting local festivals, fairs, markets, farm tours or farm breakfasts. Refer to each municipality's chamber of commerce for more information.

### Scenic Resources

St. Croix County has an abundance of scenic resources. Some of the most notable include:

- St. Croix River, especially the federally owned lands and Ferry Landing site in Town of Somerset.
- Willow River State Park, Willow River Falls
- Eau Galle River Recreation Area with the Spring Valley Dam, the largest earthen dam in Wisconsin
- Perch Lake, Homestead Parklands on Perch Lake
- Apple River, especially the historic tubing sites and at Huntingdon
- Rocky Coulee Area on Eau Galle River, Town of Cady
- Numerous sites along the Willow River, especially Lake Mallalieu, Hudson/North Hudson and Anderson Springs, Town of Richmond
- Numerous Wildlife Areas, especially the Cylon and Oakridge wildlife areas.

One technique for preservation of scenic views is the federal and state “scenic byway” and “rustic road” programs to preserve and celebrate particularly scenic road corridors.

- The **National Scenic Byways Program** is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has funded 3,049 projects for state and nationally designated byway routes in 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. There are 150 such designated Byways in 46 states. The Federal Highway Administration promotes the collection as the America's Byways®. The National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants program provides funding for byway-related projects each year, as part of the Federal Highway Administrations Discretionary Grants Program. Projects to support and enhance National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads and State-designated byways are eligible. Applications are prepared online but submitted through the State's byway program agency. More information on this program is available at their website: <http://byways.org/>.
- A 1999 state law (Wisconsin Act 9) directed the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to develop and administer a state Scenic Byways program. The program is a cooperative effort between local communities and WisDOT to identify and promote state highway corridors with scenic and/or historical attributes that provide travelers an enjoyable visual, educational and recreational experience. Wisconsin scenic byways should be:
  - part of the state highway system (a numbered state or federal highway other than an interstate)
  - at least 30 miles long
  - offer travelers outstanding scenic views or historic resources combined with recreational and/or cultural attributes
  - be initiated/supported by local groups and governments.
- Anyone with an interest in their community and in promoting the area's scenic, historic, recreational and educational resources can participate in the Scenic Byways program.

Additional information is found on the following website:

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/byways](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/byways).

- The nearest scenic byway to St. Croix County is The Great River Road, an “American Byway,” that parallels the Mississippi River from Minnesota to Louisiana. In Wisconsin it runs from Prescott to the southern edge of the state.

State “rustic roads” designations would be best suited for scenic town roads. To qualify, a roadway must be substantially undeveloped and have outstanding natural features, including native vegetation, abundant wildlife, open areas or agricultural vistas that make the area unique. The federal “scenic byway” program may be best suited for state or county highways. The county may want to work with local communities to explore possibilities, advantages and disadvantages of these programs.

There are four designated rustic roads in the county. Additional information on designated roads and the program is provided in the Transportation Section or on the following website:

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/rusticroads.htm](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/rusticroads.htm).

A second technique to preserve scenic resources would be to encourage local inventory of scenic sites and efforts to incorporate these into developments as shared spaces, common open space or public parks so they will remain natural and open to residents.

Another possible technique for preservation of scenic views is to require a viewshed analysis at the time of development. This would require amendments to the county or local subdivision ordinances. A viewshed analysis would identify the places from where the new development could be seen from other locations and the impact of the view that would result if development occurred in the manner proposed. New development could be designed, located and landscaped in a manner that does not detract from the scenic views.

## SUMMARY

The programs identified here can assist local communities in their planning efforts and in the protection of cultural resources. Protection of such resources needs to be balanced with, and can be complementary to, other community goals.

### *Cultural Resources Conditions Summary*

- There are 34 locations in St. Croix County on the National Register of Historic Places, 28 of the 34 are in either Hudson or New Richmond.
- More than 1,500 historic places and sites in St. Croix County have been identified as having historic value and are on the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory. However, it should be noted that the inventory is not comprehensive, and in many cases the inventory is outdated because resources and structures have been moved, demolished or altered.
- Most local communities in St. Croix County have identified their own list of unique historic, scenic and cultural resources.
- There are eight historical organizations working to preserve the area’s past.
- There are nine libraries or centers with historical and genealogical research materials serving St. Croix County.
- St. Croix County has an abundance of scenic resources.